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*The Love of the Brethren, proceeding from a
Perception of the Love of God:*

A
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF
The Rev. SAMUEL STENNETT, D.D.
Who departed this Life, AUG. 24, 1795.

PREACHED
IN LITTLE WILD-STREET, LINCOLN'S-
INN FIELDS, Sept. 6, 1795.

By JOSEPH JENKINS, D.D. *K*

TOGETHER WITH THE
ADDRESS AT THE INTERMENT.

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE FAMILY
AND CHURCH.

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TO THE
MOURNFUL FAMILY
OF THE DECEASED,
AND
TO THE SORROWFUL
CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
OF WHICH HE WAS PASTOR,
THE FOLLOWING SERMON,
AND
ADDRESS AT HIS INTERMENT,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
ARE
WITH GREAT RESPECT,
INSCRIBED
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE
AND SYMPATHIZING
FRIENDS AND SERVANTS,
THE AUTHORS,

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A

S E R M O N, &c.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, .

THE situation in which providence hath placed me at this instant, is more affecting and painful than I have words to express. When I look around this sable-arrayed place of worship, and this sorrowful assembly, I behold a weeping family, lamenting the loss of one of the tenderest fathers, and that a repetition of the stroke, in a few months, by which one of the tenderest mothers was removed from them.—I see a church mourning for a most affectionate pastor, whose long intercourse with them had made him to be regarded as a father in Israel, and whose continued presence seemed essential to their prosperity.

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rity. I see a congregation (a small representation of a more extensive circle) regretting the departure from earth, of a character so signally ornamental, so highly venerable, so distinguishedly useful. And when I turn into my own heart—alas! I also in him have lost a father, the guide and guardian of my youth, the steady, sympathizing friend and counsellor of my riper years. Thus circumstanced, your own feelings will make you judges of my sensations. Let me add, that it requires superior abilities to speak adequate to the present occasion, to do justice to a reputation of such acknowledged, such public eminence, as that of Dr. STENNETT. But I have no doubt of your consideration and candor, faint as the sketch may be, and therefore with the less hesitation I proceed.

As the direction of divine truth is to be followers of them who have had the rule over us, and who have spoken the word of God unto us, my desire is to represent to you the sublime principles which, under the exercise of grace, actuate the christian's heart, and the noble effects which they will produce in his conduct. I cannot recollect any words better adapted to my design, or more characteristic of the temper and practice of your late honoured pastor, than those of the apostle,

I JOHN,



I JOHN iii. 16.

HEREBY PERCEIVE WE THE LOVE OF GOD, BECAUSE HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US, AND WE OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN.

SELF-LOVE hath that predominant influence over the generality of people, that some writers of a speculative and philosophic turn, have resolved all the exertions of the benevolent heart, into that one stimulus; arguing thus, that the pleasure which arises from relieving distress and doing good, is the object on which the mind terminates, and its sole impulse to humane and generous undertakings. If this insinuation be thrown out to depreciate the work of God's hands, it may be replied, that it is not an unamiable view of the soul of man, as the offspring of the Most High, that, like its great original, it does good merely for the pleasure of doing it. But if it be meant to insinuate, that there is no real generosity or disinterestedness in the world, I hope experience will contradict that notion; and I think I can make a distinction between being benevolent, from the gratification the heart feels in it, and that narrow, base and sordid disposition, we usually term *selfishness*, which seeks no one's comfort or advantage but its own. Pre-

valent as the sway of this corrupt principle may be in the world, yet Paul supposes it possible, that " for a good man some would even dare to " die*." And there is that best, that most generous of excitements, in the glorious gospel of the grace of God, which, if understood and experienced in the mind, will lay the axe to the root of every selfish passion, raise the soul above worldly and mercenary tempers, teach it to find life in losing it, and to make up its happiness in following Christ, possessing his spirit, and walking as he walked, though to take up the cross may be an appendage to the duty. What those considerations are, I am now to attempt an illustration of, from the words of my text, wherein the writer, while he contrasts the love of the brethren with hatred of them, and indifference about their welfare, most ingeniously drops an hint, concerning the ground, or moving cause of that love, persuaded that if professing christians, in that or future ages, were conversant with its origin, and drank of the fountain of life, it would give birth to the noblest affections, and strike them with the impossibility of tasting that the Lord is gracious, but the stream must overflow their souls, and extend itself—if to the world in general, more especially to the cause of

* Rom. v. 7.

Christ, and to them that were one with them in the bonds of the gospel, " Hereby perceive we " the love of God, because he laid down his life " for us, and we ought to lay down our lives " for the brethren;" even as his brother Paul, for the enforcement of the duty of benevolence, wrote to the Corinthians, " Ye know the grace " of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was " rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that " ye through his poverty might be rich*." From hence then we learn, that the clearer our ideas are, and the higher opinion we entertain of the love of God to us, the more it will expand our hearts, and provoke us to love and to good works. Of course whatever aims at lowering or diminishing our sense of obligation to that love, does in the same proportion tend to deaden that affection, which of all others brings the soul nearest to God, and most resembles him. " Now " abideth faith, hope, charity, these three†;" the latter the most excellent of them all, the two former subservient to it, exhibiting the bright objects of our belief, confirming our comfort of interest in them, and thereby inflaming our minds with love. Our defects in the exercise of this heavenly frame, arise from the darkness and depravity of our nature, the strength of unbelief,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

the consequent imperfection of our faith, and the force with which earthly things strike and attach us. But when that which is perfect is come, when faith and hope are done away, rather are exchanged for the blessed vision of our God and Redeemer, this love will burn pure and uninterrupted, for we shall see as we are seen, and know even as we are known. How it animated and with what lustre it dignified the patterns of primitive christianity, and the confessors and martyrs of later ages, let scripture and other records teach us. One flame pervaded every breast, and the effects in all were similar. As the residue of the spirit is with God, and his truths are still the same—still retain their essential and actuating qualities, why may we not suppose them to be as efficacious in our age as formerly? Yes. There are not wanting some bright examples of the kind among us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, that serve as witnesses for God, and testimonies to the glory of his grace, though they shine as a few thinly scattered lights in a dark atmosphere. May the explanation I am now to give encrease their number!—It will not be expected in a discourse of this nature, that I should enter into the question of the extent of Christ's redemption. The apostle no doubt in the pronoun *us*, included himself and all who were

were at that time, or should afterwards, become real christians, brethren and partakers of the grace of God. What I propose is to speak

- I. Of the love said to be perceived;
- II. Of the perception of it; and
- III. Of that one grand evidence of this perception which is here pointed out to us.

I. The description given of this love leads our reflections to the Being who shewed it—the manner in which it was shewn—and the reasons assigned for it.

1. The Being who shewed this love is God.

As the subject treated of relates to that affection, which the Lord Jesus Christ has discovered for the human race, in bringing his salvation into the world, I am aware, and do not mean to conceal it, that the word *God* is not in our common Greek testaments, but is an insertion of our translators. Yet there is certainly a necessity of some insertion, if we would make sense of the passage. For otherwise, though the relative indicates an antecedent, there would be no antecedent for it to refer to. That the antecedent *God* is also a proper insertion, I am induced to conclude, from the authority of one or more respectable manuscripts, besides a variety of ancient translations, which have it. We

believe, likewise, from the testimony of other parts of the divine word, that the Being who is therein declared to have laid down his life for us, was, in a sense, the "true God *," the "living God †," the "mighty God ‡," the "almighty §," "who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God ||," and who when he came into this world was, in that state of humiliation, esteemed as that exalted personage, "whose throne is for ever and ever, and whom the angels worshipped as God **." But what is more directly to the point, there appears to be that authority from the context for the insertion, that is decisive in its justification. In the first verse the apostle exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."—Knew not whom? knew not God. The same Being is spoken of in the second verse, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—When who shall appear? As the reference is to the second coming of

* 1 John v. 20.

† Heb. iii. 12.

‡ If. ix. 6.

§ Rev. i. 8.

|| Phil. iii. 6.

** Heb. i. 6.

Christ,

Christ, he is God who is then to appear, and then to be seen. More expressly is it intimated of the same Being, in the fifth verse, " that he " was manifested to take away our sin," a clause that can only be applied to our Saviour Jesus. And if in the eighth verse he is stiled the " Son " of God," that distinction doth not, more or less, set aside the proof we have, that all the attributes peculiar to Deity, do in as strict a sense reside in the Son as in the Father. There was a propriety therefore in this insertion; nor can we, taking it in connexion with the other passages recited, form an opinion of our Lord and Redeemer, as inferior to God, the only begotten Son of God, the very brightness of his Father's glory, the full and express image of his person. Neither is it without reason that we are tenacious of this doctrine, because of the necessity we conceive there is in it to our comfort in life, and in the hour of death, and because the higher our views are of the Being from whom this love hath proceeded, the more it aggrandizes the great subject of salvation, the more it charms and delights the soul; yea, winds up the believing mind to astonishment, to rapture, to joy unspeakable and full of glory. What elevated thoughts had your late honoured pastor of this object of his confidence and adoration,

when

when in his last hours he thus expressed himself,
 “ His name is as ointment poured forth. O!
 “ He is the chief among ten thousand, and alto-
 “ gether lovely.” But who can testify sufficiently
 of his love? Love! Not of a man like ourselves—
 Compassion! Not of an earthly monarch, how-
 ever capable or condescending.—Affection! Not
 of an angel or superangelic spirit, but of God.—
 God the great, the ever blessed—God the mighty
 and majestic—the lofty One who inhabiteth eter-
 nity, and whose name is holy—who created and
 who upholds all things by the word of his
 power—God who is good unto all, and whose
 tender mercies are over all his works—the eter-
 nal Son of God hath humbled himself to shew
 that peculiar regard for us sinners, which is here
 termed *love*. What motive could a Being so
 absolutely independent have to this stoop of him-
 self, except what arose from his mere good will?
 surely none.—Yet further to enlarge our ideas of
 this love, let us enquire,

2. Into the manner in which it was displayed.
 God laid down his life for us.

It becomes us to speak with modesty upon
 that which relates to God, and more particularly
 to his nature and perfections. If there are so
 many inscrutable topics in the works of cre-
 ation and providence, can we wonder that the
 higher

higher we go, the nearer we approach to Deity, the more our conceptions are lost, and we cannot find him out. Here then our duty is to be silent and believe; and he that will give credit no further than he is able to comprehend, is in a fair way to disbelieve every thing, and to doubt of his own existence. The doctrine in my text is a truth, for the knowledge of which we are solely indebted to divine revelation; it depends entirely upon the authenticity of that source of information, and the fact of its being contained in it; and these admitted, we act wrong if we go into any deeper investigation. "Search the scriptures," said our Lord, "for they are they that testify of me*." When then the bible instructs us,

First, That thus to lay down his life, doth not imply any mutation in that Being, "with whom is no variableness, nor any shadow of turning†;" but that he took into union with himself, a life which could be laid down, we may safely confess our ignorance, as to the mode of his investiture with that life. It is sufficient for all the purposes of religion and practical godliness to learn, that he did so—that the "word, which was God, took flesh and dwelt among

* John v. 39.

† James i. 17.

“ us *;—that God sent forth his Son, made of
 “ a woman, made under the law †;”—that he
 was born into this world, and lived upon this
 earth;—and that all the glories of the Godhead
 were so closely concentrated in him, that their
 lustre shone through every part of his life, and
 added majesty and efficacy to all his actions.
 When he walked upon the water—when the
 winds and seas obeyed his voice—when diseases
 and death fled before him, and devils, though
 reluctant, were subject to him, what unpreju-
 diced spectator would have hesitated in the con-
 fession, “ Truly this is the Son of God?”—But
 I forbear. My design is rather to speak,

Secondly, Of his laying down his life.—And
 was not every one of those days he spent in the
 flesh, devoted to the unremitted exercise of righ-
 teousness and usefulness? Not a moment was
 wasted in matters impertinent or uninteresting.
 He went about doing good, healing all kinds of
 maladies, preaching the gospel of the kingdom,
 instructing the ignorant, meekly accommodating
 himself to the capacities of the rude and un-
 learned, bearing with their prejudices, and de-
 claring the things which concerned their ever-
 lasting peace. Not a conversation in public or
 private, but was fraught with doctrine; not a

* John i. 1, 12.

† Gal. iv. 4.

miracle

miracle or providential event, but gave him occasion for spiritual improvement. "Hast thou not known," (said the two disciples, as they went to Emmaus, unconscious to whom they spoke, "Hast thou not known) concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word, before God and all the people*?"—But the meaning yet more directly conveyed is, that he came into the world, to make a voluntary sacrifice of his life. Himself hath assured us, that "no man took his life from him; he had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it again†;" but he made his very soul a free-will offering. Accordingly, he assumed our nature in those circumstances of meanness and penury, that affliction met him at his entrance into the world, nor left him until he quitted it. He travelled through life, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Poverty and distress, weariness and painfulness, were his intimate companions. He was despised and rejected of men. The world knew him not; or if it noticed him, it was that the shafts of pride, envy and malevolence might be levelled at him. His holiness was traduced—his person maltreated—his doctrine gainfayed—and at length the tragical scene was closed, by a catastrophe the

* Luke xxiv. 19.

† John x. 18.

most

most awful imaginable. He was betrayed into the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, and by them was set at nought, crucified and slain. Nor only did earth vent its rage against him, but heaven seemed to join in the conspiracy. Witness the anguish of his soul, when he sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.—Witness the thick darkness, the horror which absorbed him, when suspended upon the cross.—Witness the heart-rending cry, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me * ? ” But to all this and more he surrendered himself, until in lingering torments he finished his undertaking, and gave up the ghost. “ He endured “ the contradiction of sinners against himself †. “ He gave his back to the smiters, and his “ cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and “ hid not his face from shame and spitting ‡. “ For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame.” To rehearse these things to you, is at best to recall to your minds a little, of what your honoured pastor so frequently and sweetly expatiated upon.—Permit me now,

3. To enter a little into the reasons the text assigns for this act of love.

The apostle says, He laid down his life *for us*; and as the word in this connexion is well known

* Matt. xxvii. 46. † Heb. xii. 2. 3. ‡ Isaiah l. 6.

to signify *instead*, or *in the room of* another, it intimates that our Lord is not only to be looked to, as an example of suffering affliction and of patience under it, but as a *substitutory sacrifice*; and from hence we learn,

First, That if he had not so kindly laid down his life, we must in our own persons have suffered death; an observation that reminds us of the words unwittingly spoken by the Jewish High-priest, "It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not*." This leads us to ask then, for what sort of men did the Lord lay down his life? Was it for the good, the pious, the virtuous, the amiable, the exemplary, the useful—to preserve those from death, that were an honour to mankind, and the world's greatest blessing? Ah! no. — For the ungodly—for sinners—for enemies to God—for rebels against heaven, who had forfeited every favour—who had drawn down God's judgments upon their guilty heads, and lay exposed to his awful, his everlasting displeasure.—O! to read of Christ's sufferings simply as an history, and without self-application, is to miss of the benefits resulting from them. To read of them with profit is to have the fellowship of those sufferings, and in

† John xi. 50—

them,

them, as in a glass, to contemplate the immaculate holiness of God's nature and attributes, the inflexibility of his justice, the indispensableness of those sanctions, which guard his righteous law, and the danger to which we were liable, of wrath and fiery indignation. For if God laid down his life instead of us, we learn,

Secondly, That he did in some views bear the very punishment from which he delivered us.—And so it is written, “ He bore our sins “ in his own body on the tree,” and “ Christ “ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, “ being” himself “ made a curse for us*.” It is true, that the dignity of his person and sacrifice was such, as to compensate for the everlasting duration of the punishment we had merited. It is true also, that being perfectly holy, the stings of a guilty conscience could not fasten upon him. But when you recount his sufferings, was there ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? It was not the losing of life merely, but death in its most aggravated and tremendous appearances. Ah! how was the holy Lamb of God worried and torn! How did it “ please †” the Lord to bruise his innocent soul, and to put him to open shame! Who knoweth the power

* 1 Pet. ii. 24. Gal. iii. 13.

† Is. liii. 10.

of God's anger, or how wretched that person must be, in whose misery Omnipotence finds complacency? Do we not see in the sufferings of our Lord, that if we had been the victims he was made, how impossible it was that we could have sustained the fearful strokes of wrath? Would not the divine fury have borne us before it, and the consuming fire have without end devoured us? Yea, further, if God laid down his life instead of us, then we learn also,

Thirdly, That no inferior sacrifice to that would have sufficed.—Had sin been that trifling offence, that the life of an innocent man could have expiated it—had it been of that comparatively small malignity, that the sacrifice of an angel, or of a million of angels, could have atoned for it, would not the eternal Father have spared his own Son? Would he have delivered him up without reserve? Would he have treated as an enemy him in whom he was always well-pleased? Doth it not impress our minds with the worth of our souls, and the infinite heinousness of our transgressions, that it was requisite that he who is infinitely glorious and honourable, should become of no reputation—be made sin, take upon him our shame—be accounted an abhorrence, that as our surety he might make satisfaction for us? How lively a comment were the pangs he underwent, upon those awful words

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himself

himself uttered, " What shall it profit a man,
 " if he gain the whole world and lose his own
 " soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange
 " for his soul*?" But with this proof he has af-
 forded of his transcendent regard, may we not
 add, that God having laid down his life for us,

Fourthly, There can be no doubt of its com-
 pletely answering the bright ends, for which he
 took and resigned it. Sing, O heavens! for the
 Lord hath done it. Dry up your tears, ye mourn-
 ing sinners! abate your sorrows, and be comfort-
 ed, for the Lord hath done it. His own right hand
 and his holy arm have gotten him the victory. The
 perfection of his obedience reached the summit of
 that righteousness by which the law was magni-
 fied; and his death was the strongest of all argu-
 ments, that " it is easier for heaven and earth to
 " pass, than one tittle of the law to fail †." He
 hath " put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ‡;
 " by one offering for ever perfected them that
 " are sanctified §, and there is redemption through
 " his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to
 " the riches of his grace ||; yea, the blood of
 " Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from
 " all sin **." In token of its efficacy therefore he
 arose from the dead, and entered into his glory.
 And having freely given himself for us, he now

* Matt. xvi. 26.

† Luke xvi. 17.

‡ Heb. ix. 26.

§ Heb. x. 14.

|| Eph. i. 7.

** 1 John i. 7.

lives freely to intercede, and generously to bestow. The church which he purchased with his own blood, is still the object of his dearest delight, and his regard for it is immutable. The person and the soul of each of his redeemed lie nearest to his heart, and the power with which he stands invested, is all made subservient to their truest interests. The greatest of blessings is not too vast, the best of blessings not too good, for him to pour out upon them. With the liberal grant of himself, how shall he not freely give us all things? He lives to carry on his cause in the world; and with the same tenderness with which he offered up his life for your sakes, to hear your petitions, to provide for your wants, to satisfy you with the good things of his house, and to fill his poor with bread. O! may all your eyes wait upon him, who is inclined as well as able to do for you, exceeding abundantly more than you can ask or think.—Through this medium the apostle, with the common consent of christians in his day, professed to have perceived the love of God.—And now methinks,

II. You are ready to ask, Who that hears of it but must immediately perceive it? Why is not the whole world taken up with it? What can engross their time and thoughts so pleasantly, so profitably? Yet the history of human life records,

that few there be that find it. Made of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, our Lord came to his own, but his own received him not. If the obscurity of his supposed origin, the meanness of his rank in life, and the disgrace of a public execution, were *to the Jews a stumbling block*, the same doctrine of the cross was *to the polite Greeks foolishness**. Their deepest researches could not inform them, how the death of one who suffered as a malefactor, though innocent, could be the *wisdom of God and the power of God*, to the justification and salvation of multitudes, and therefore they thought meanly of the counsel of God. And still the light shineth into darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Yea, to come home to your own consciences, Do you not remember the time, christians, when you perceived not this love?—When days, months, and years passed over your heads, and you knew not God, you thought not of his name?—When you heard the word preached, and the preciousness of Christ was not unveiled to you? And do you not still weep over your remaining darkness, your ignorance and insensibility? Have you not been, since the removal of your pastor, in the dust before God, that you retain in your memories so few of those excellent remarks that dropped from his lips?—

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

But

But whence is it in any respect otherwise with you, and that though once blind, now you in any measure see? This apostle confesses how it came to pass in his own case, “ He hath given us an “ understanding that we may know him that is “ true*.” Had not that blessing been bestowed, John who lay on the bosom of Jesus, and imbibed so large a share of the same spirit, would have been alike ignorant and wicked with others. And have you not the conviction within you also, that “ God who commanded light to shine out “ of darkness, hath shined into your hearts, to “ give the knowledge of the glory of God in the “ face of Jesus Christ †?” Hence you perceived your absolute need of such a Saviour—Hence you discerned the glory and suitableness of that Saviour—Hence you were in some degree persuaded of his freeness and faithfulness—Hence you were drawn to desire, to seek, to trust in him—And hence to perceive, to form a good hope, through grace and founded upon the word of truth, that he laid down his life for *you*—to say, “ He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.” It is alone owing to the witness of God’s spirit to these truths, and their powerful application to the conscience, that unbelief and guilty fears subside—that the misgivings of the mind are hushed

* 1 John v. 21.

† 2 Cor. iv. 6.

—that faith breaks forth, to receive the divine testimony, and to lay hold of eternal life, in the knowledge of God in Christ—and that the glorious fruits of love and likeness to God, adorn the inward man, and are exemplified in the outward demeanour, of them that are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.—Which leads me to speak,

III. Of that one grand effect, which the apostle avows this love ought to have upon us (and which, he certainly means, its due perception will have upon them that are endowed with it) “ that we should lay down our lives “ for the brethren.”

Can a man be profitable unto God as a wise man may be profitable unto himself, or his righteousness profit another man? No. Though the breathings of the mind under an experience of this love will be, “ What shall I render unto “ the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” yet our goodness extendeth not to him. But situated as we are in this world, he hath made it necessary that men should subsist, by the mutual help of one another; and there are those of our own species to whom he more particularly turns our attention. He calls them the excellent in the earth; he is not ashamed to denominate them his brethren, yea, the members of his body,

body, of his flesh and of his bones, for whom in common with ourselves he laid down his life, whom he has called out of darkness into his marvellous light, and for whom also he hath reserved an inheritance among the saints; and he thus addresses us, "If ye would manifest your love to me, in return for what I have done for you, as much as ye do unto the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me;" and the higher sense we have of his love to us, the more hearty will be our expressions of respect for them he loves, by our meekness and humility, friendship and familiarity; by esteeming others better than ourselves, and in honour preferring one another;—by thinking no evil, but forbearing one another in love;—by maintaining the unity of the spirit in Christ the bond of peace:—by being kind and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us;—by sympathizing with the distressed, and cherishing them under their infirmities;—in one word, our love to the saints will have no undue bounds, as the love of our God was boundless; we shall "lay down our lives for the brethren." I must observe, however, that thus to lay down our lives, doth not make it our duty to rush upon a voluntary death instead of another. No man hath a greater right to dispose

of his own life, at his pleasure, than he hath of his neighbour's. It is not his property, as the life our Lord took and laid down was his. It is in a qualified sense that we are to understand this clause. Ah! who can drink of the cup that our Redeemer drank of, or be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with? but yet—"if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," and our love to bear some, though a disproportionate, resemblance to what Christ did for us. Let the conduct of those worthies that have gone before us serve for an illustration of this remark.—For instance,

1. When from love to Christ, and to be the means of calling in his brethren, his apostles and ministers have "endured all things for the elects' sakes, that they might obtain the salvation which "is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*." And particularly, when in critical and persecuting ages, they exposed their lives in preaching the gospel from city to city, and before assemblies from which they expected strong opposition, perhaps death, yea preached boldly, not only at the hazard, but in the certain prospect, that finally they must offer up their lives, and seal the truth with their blood. So the apostle Paul

* 2 Tim. ii. 10.

" after

“ after the manner, or under the form, of men,
 “ fought with beasts at Ephesus * ;” and to the
 same purpose he professed, to the elders of the
 christian church in that place, “ None of these
 “ things move me, neither count I my life dear
 “ unto myself, so that I might finish my course
 “ with joy, and the ministry I have received of
 “ the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the
 “ grace of God †.” Thus also he wrote to the
 Philippians, “ Yea and if I be offered upon the
 “ sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and
 “ rejoice with you all ‡.” And thus the eulogy
 of the martyrs is founded in the book of Reve-
 lation, “ They overcame by the blood of the
 “ Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ;
 “ and they loved not their lives unto the death §.”
 —Again,

2. When from love to Christ and to his saints,
 their brethren in the gospel have risked their
 own lives, either that they might preserve the
 brethren from the fury of an enraged populace
 which would have torn them to pieces ||, or when
 they administered to them in prison, though
 they were equally liable to be apprehended as
 partners in their supposed crimes, and were ob-
 noxious to the same condemnation. Thus Aquila

* 1 Cor. xv. 32.

† Acts xx. 24.

‡ Phil. ii. 17.

§ Rev. xii. 11.

|| Acts xvii, 19.

and

and Priscilla laid down their necks for the life of Paul *, and the Hebrews are reminded, that they had manfully “ endured a great fight of afflictions, “ partly, whilst they were made a gazing-stock “ both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly, “ whilst they became the companions of them “ that were so used †.”—And why may not the like estimate be made,

3. Of those godly people, who in less dangerous seasons, or in times of no danger on account of religion, have exchanged ease and affluence for toil and hardship, animated to this sacrifice by the same mind that was in Christ Jesus : Or who have given up worldly preferments and honours, for the sake of a good conscience, and to whom it was the most desirable preferment, to be the humble disciples and servants of the meek and lowly Jesus.—Private Christians, whose unwearied solicitude in the cause of humanity, found greater attractions in the gloom of a prison and the dungeons of wretchedness, than in the glitter and luxury of a palace ;—whose health was exhausted in journeys across the ocean and across the desert ;—whose life was worn out, in rendering comfort

* Rom. xvi. 4.

† Heb. x. 32, 33.

to the lives of others * :—and who, if misery, the fruit of wickedness, could thus move their compassion, would have been incomparably more sanguine in the exercise of their benevolence, had their charity been directed towards any of the household of faith, suffering in the cause of a dying and risen Redeemer.—Faithful ministers of Christ also, who have spent themselves and been spent, uniformly and vigorously, in glorifying God and promoting the welfare of immortal souls, as well as for the temporal relief and comfort of multitudes ;—whose main happiness consisted in preaching Christ and him crucified, holding forth the word of life, warning, exhorting, persuading, if so be that by all means, with the blessing of God, they might save some ;—faithful to the cause of truth and peace ;—not seeking their own things but the things of Christ, not their own but another's wealth ;—laying out themselves in season and out of season, to spread abroad the sweet favour of the name of Jesus, and to shew tenderness and sympathy, wherever their presence or influence reached ;—whose very souls breathed good-will towards men, and whose lives to their latest hour were laid out, yea, laid down, in their service.—“ Mark the

* The benevolent Mr. Howard. See a Funeral Discourse for him by Dr. Stennett, published in 1790.

"perfect man and behold the upright," who hath thus walked, and in these respects given us so fair an ensample.—It is not the picture of imagination, the outlines of which I have drawn before you, but that of *real life*, which you and I so lately gazed upon, but which we now sorrow for, that in the person of our honoured father, your pastor, we shall see it—no more.—He is not—for God hath taken him.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. The memory of the just is blessed; and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." The lives and characters of the godly are recorded in scripture, for our encouragement and imitation; the biography of other good men has not been without its use; and as the life of your late pastor is more particularly interesting to you, a short memorial of it I know is expected. I despair indeed of being able to equal the original; but wherein I fail, your own memories will lastingly supply the deficiency.

DR. SAMUEL STENNETT, I need not inform you, was the younger* son of Dr. Joseph Sten-

* Dr. Stennett had an elder brother, *Mr. Joseph Stennett*, who was pastor of the Baptist Church at *Coate* in *Oxfordshire*. He died in 1769; and a Funeral Sermon for him was published by the Rev. Mr. *Turner*, of *Abingdon*.

nett, a former worthy pastor of this church. He was born at Exeter, in which city his father had been many years pastor of the Baptist Church, before his residence in London. He was formed by nature and by grace, for that distinguished figure he afterwards made. To a wonderful strength of natural faculties, vigour of imagination and acuteness of judgment, he had added, from his earliest years, that close attention to reflection and study, that there was scarcely a topic in science or literature, in religion or even politics*, but he seemed to have investigated; and so habitual was it to him to arrange his ideas on the different subjects, in a manner peculiar to himself, and yet quite natural, that when a question we thought new, unusual or perplexed, hath been proposed to him, we were surprized to find that it was familiar to him, and in a few sentences he would develope the difficulty, as far as a reasonable man could expect satisfaction; for he was possessed of that happy

* What, and how moderate his sentiments of the politics of the present day were, may be seen in an excellent anonymous pamphlet printed by him, about two years ago, entitled *A Trip to Holyhead*; a conversation founded upon fact, and improved to a very good purpose.—I wish much to see a second edition printed, as it is the best defence of the Dissenters I know, against the aspersions of modern times.

facility

facility of resolving intricate matters, that confusion seemed to fly before his comprehensive mind. His preparatory studies for the ministry were passed under the tuition of Mr. *Hubbard*, formerly an eminent theological tutor and minister at *Stepney*, and under that celebrated linguist *Dr. John Walker*, then of *Mile-End*, afterwards of *Homerton*, whose successful method of instruction furnished so many dissenting congregations, as well as churches in the establishment, with critical and learned ministers. His attainments in Latin, Greek, and the Oriental tongues, and his knowledge of sacred literature, are abundantly visible in his valuable controversial writings, and the variety of discourses he hath published*. Besides which his acquaintance with modern authors, with what is commonly stiled polite learning, history, the constitution and language of his country—his command of words upon all occasions, and that mellifluous art he had of putting them together—the chastity of his diction—his fine vein of poetry (which he chiefly applied to religious subjects) that vivacity of elocution with

* Remarks on the Christian Minister's reasons for administering Baptism by sprinkling.—Discourses on Personal Religion—Domestic Duties—The parable of the Sower—and the Divine Authority and various use of the Holy Scriptures; besides many Occasional Sermons.

which he spoke—the cheerfulness and entertainment of his common conversation—the lively fallies of his wit, which yet were never ill-natured, pointed, or satirical—his consummate prudence, and power over his own temper—the unaffected gentility of his address, and the politeness of his manners were so pleasing, that I never heard him spoken of but with admiration. He was blessed with that affability of mind, that he could accommodate himself to the meanest, and give advice and comfort to the poor, the vulgar, the illiterate.—In many a wretched apartment in this city have I been with him, when he has wept over the sick and dying, and while his hand in private relieved them, kneeling on the bare floor he lifted up his cries to God for them. And yet if called upon, he was so perfectly at ease in the higher circles of life, that respectable personages, in honourable stations and of noble rank, have sought and thought themselves honoured by his friendship; all the use he made of which was, that it gave him the greater opportunity of doing good; nor was he to be deterred from, or retarded in this pursuit, by the attacks of obloquy and slander; a good conscience in the sight of God carried him above the reproaches of censoriousness and calumny.

Had

Had ambition, his personal emolument, or preferment of any kind been his objects, his own accomplishments and large connexions opened a ready door to them: And what is more, he might have had preferment unenvied. I have myself heard persons of eminence in the establishment regret that Dr. STENNETT was not among them; and add, that there is not a situation in that church which he was undeserving of. But though he was candid to the opinions of others, a friend to private judgment, and a lover of good men of every persuasion, he was a Dissenter—a Dissenter, from principle—a Baptist;—he desired no higher honour upon earth, than to be an useful Baptist Minister; and the only preferment he had (if I may call by that name, what had no emolument whatever) was, that in the year 1763, the *King's College* and university of *Aberdeen*, unsolicited by him, conferred upon him the degree of *Doctor in Divinity*. But this honour did not elevate his mind, above what he was before. No. He was still the same humble christian; and to God he had consecrated his days, his talents, his strength, his reputation, his all.—Called by the grace of God in early life, and brought to perceive that love my text speaks of, he willingly presented himself a living sacrifice to the Lord. Baptized by his own father, when very young,
he

he became a member of this church, of which he was the ornament for more than *fifty* years, and *forty seven* of them he ministered to you in holy things, first as assistant to his father, and afterwards as his successor in the pastoral care of the church, to which he was ordained in the year 1758. How naturally he cared for the Dissenting interest was visible from his assiduous labours for its prosperity, and the use he made of his intercourse with the great, for obtaining objects of vast importance towards the extension of religious liberty; for deliverance from those shackles that were oppressive, and which might in worse times prove an handle for persecution. His judicious publications upon that occasion will long speak for him*, as will the respect he at all times paid to each denomination, and his readiness to serve them in every good work, Difference of religious sentiment made not the least alteration in his behaviour. And though he might think the difference of that magnitude, that he durst not venture his own soul upon it, still he knew that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness

* A free and dispassionate account of the first application of the Protestant Dissenters to Parliament, for relief in the matter of subscription, in the year 1772; and afterwards a tract upon the subscription to the Declaration, in the year 1779, when the application was successful.

of God, and that bad temper, bad manners, and illiberal epithets, would not recommend the love of God, or the truth as it is in Jesus. There was not an austere feature to be seen in his countenance, or a forbidding accent that fell from his lips.

The Baptist denomination lay particularly near his heart, and his concern for it ran uniformly through his whole life. In the earlier part of his ministry he proved how well qualified he was, for the tuition of the younger brethren intended for the ministry, and he was the means of introducing into public life some worthy characters, whose learning and ministerial abilities were a credit to the cause they espoused*. But if the diversity of his other engagements prevented his continuance in that capacity, he was happy whenever an opportunity offered of infusing instruction, indeed of saying or doing any thing, that might contribute to the good of that profession, which he judged to be nearest the plan of the sacred scriptures. It was his delight to promote peace and brotherly love, to make up

* One of his pupils, educated in his house and called into the ministry by his church, was the Rev. William Clarke, A.M. formerly pastor of the Baptist Church in *Unicorn-Yard, Southwark*, but more lately of that in *Exeter*, who died a few days before him. He was a man of deep reflection, extensive learning, and a most excellent spirit.

differences,

differences, or explain misunderstandings, that at any time unhappily took place in churches or among ministers. He grudged no pains; and we can all recollect repeated instances in which God made him remarkably instrumental, in bringing about so desirable an end. If the churches were in harmony, and appeared upon sound principles to prosper, no man took greater pleasure than he did, or had more heart-felt sorrow at the contrary appearances.

But I mean to bring the remembrance of him nearer home, and to set him before you; if I can, as the pastor of this church—this christian society. O my friends! what he was, what he lately was, may you and I never forget!—what he was to the very short interval between his labours and his decease!—With what unwearied zeal he appeared in this place!—With what fervor and humility he went before you, in supplications to the throne of grace!—With what clearness and warmth he opened up the scriptures, declared the tidings of salvation to you, and as a father doth his children, exhorted, comforted, warned, directed you!—With what solemnity he administered the ordinance of baptism to the greater part of you, to myself, to many others!—With what sacred ardor he petitioned God for us, when in prayer he laid hands upon us! (Me-

thinks I can at this instant realize the pressure of his hands, and hear the earnestness of his words, upon that occasion.)—With what melting pathos he stately administered to us (and in *that* place to you a month ago) the memorials of the body and blood of the Lord!—With what emphasis, even to tears, he would frequently repeat those lines of Dr. *Young*,

“ A pardon bought with blood! With blood divine!

“ With blood divine, of him I made my foe!”

—In what a pleasing and familiar manner, in your private meetings, he expounded the word of God to you!—With what prudence he presided in your assemblies for deliberation, and how anxious he was that unanimity might prevail among you!—Nor must I omit how ardently he recommended charity to you, for the relief of indigent ministers; what pride (if I may so speak) he would take, if you excelled in that duty; nor how much his heart was drawn out, to the dear children who attend worship in this place, and whom he addressed, publickly and more privately, as those that he hoped would be the future seed of the church, and ripen to the glory of God, when the present generation hath left the world!—With what tenderness did he, as long and as often

often as he was able, visit you, and impart sympathy and help in your afflictions; and how frank, open and accessible was he at all seasons, when his advice or assistance was sought!—With what faithfulness, yet meekness, did he even rebuke where necessary; and how glad was he to restore the unfettered or reclaim the wandering!—Ye know and God also, after what manner he was with you, and how he kept back nothing that was profitable; but shewed you and taught you, publickly and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

As an husband, a father, and master of a family, he was alike upright and exemplary. United in marriage with one of the best of women, they lived together in the closest and most uninterrupted affection, for more than forty years. She was an unaffected picture of piety and good-nature, and he walked with her as an heir of the grace of life, till about five months ago, she stepped out of life a little before him, that she might as it were meet him, and welcome him to glory. The acknowledgement of God in their family met with ample reward. The tender love and christian solicitude they bore towards their children was returned with reciprocal affection, and they had the happiness of seeing them

walk in the ways of God, and their son a preacher of the gospel. The concern they shewed for the domestics of their family, for their spiritual good especially, was such as I trust will not be forgot by them. Some of us can look back upon those pleasing instances, in which God hath blessed it for their conversion and salvation; particularly that affecting church-meeting in which one of Dr. STENNETT'S servants told us, how a check was given to the thoughtlessness of his youth, and his resolutions for sin, at his master's family-worship; and how, born again in his master's house, he was brought into the road to Zion. You heard in silence and in tears, and your hearts praised God*. Nor were his endeavours confined to his own family, the whole neighbourhood shared in them, and I have heard of the good effects of the very last sermon he preached at *Muswell-Hill*.

But that which diffused vigor and animation through all the rest, was his character as a man—a Christian. He set the Lord before him—

* This was a very remarkable story of a prophane and vicious youth, tutored on a bowling-green, whom the Doctor at the earnest request of an aged member, the boy's aunt, took into his family, and who afterwards proved a very godly man. The Church will recollect with respect the name of *John Hancock*.

had habitual recourse to prayer, private and mental—and walked with God.—Often hath he told me the inward workings of his mind, which shewed how deeply he had entered into the spirit of experimental religion, and on this head, where he was intimate he would astonish. Much of it must have been seen also in his preaching and in his behaviour;—in that disinterestedness, which made him think himself the debtor of all, if he could do them good;—that patient submission to the divine will in a variety of trying afflictions, and none more trying than the dissolution of a long and most affectionate connexion, by the death of his wife;—that forgiveness of injuries, and disposition to put the best construction upon the actions of other people;—that abhorrence of evil speaking, that as it was commonly remarked of Mrs. STENNETT, that “no one heard her speak evil of any body, how ever bad,” so if the Doctor heard any one spoken evil of he would reply, “Well, see now if you can’t tell something good of that person.”—But I beg pardon.—I must hasten to the concluding scene of his life.

The death of Mrs. STENNETT was an event that presaged his own removal from us. He was submissive to the supreme disposal, but did not appear to have any further regard for living in

this world, or to think of his long continuance in it. All his talk seemed to be a repetition of these words, "The time of my departure is at hand." The duties of his ministry indeed he went to with redoubled diligence, as if aware that the night was coming when he could no longer work; and he was hardly with-held from those super-abundant exercises, that must have been immediately detrimental to his health. His retirements were chiefly spent in meditations on the bible; in which also he indulged his taste for poetry, as some admirable specimens he has left behind him demonstrate. His conversation and prayers were particularly spiritual, and you will long retain the favour of the two last discourses he preached in this pulpit. The first, on Christ as an High-Priest that is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," was the result of his meditations during a sleepless night the preceding week; but a night so comfortable as, he confessed, he had never before enjoyed in his life. The perfect knowledge the Lord Jesus had of his wants—the tender care he exercises, and the sufferings he so freely underwent, were his astonishment. None who knew Dr. STENNETT could suspect him to be deficient, in exalted sentiments of the Redeemer, yet all he had before conceived

and preached of him, appeared small compared to what he then experienced; and hence he exhorted you, to “ come boldly to the throne of “ grace, that you might obtain mercy, and find “ grace to help in time of need *.”—Illness and death prevented his return to you; but he desired a friend to tell you, “ that he loved you “ all in the Lord, and that the truths he had “ preached were his alone consolation in the hour “ of death.”—The temper and comfort of his mind in his illness, were discovered by several little incidents which cannot but be pleasing to you who had such a value for him.—Before he was confined to his bed he prayed one evening in his family, in a manner that deeply impressed all present, “ that God might give an easy “ passage out of life;” and God granted him that which he requested.—Some vinegar and other ingredients being given him as a gargle for his throat, he said, with great emotion, which shewed his thoughts to be directed towards Jesus, “ And in his thirst they “ gave him vinegar to drink. O! when I reflect “ upon the sufferings of Christ, I am ready to “ say, what have I been thinking of all my “ life? They are now my only support;” and he added, respecting those tenets that would de-

* Heb. iv. 15, 16.

grade Christ's person and atonement, "What should
 " I do now, if I had only such opinions to sup-
 " port me *?"—Taking his daughter by the
 hand he said, " Wherefore he is able to save to
 " the uttermost, all them that come unto God
 " by him: He is able to keep that which I have
 " committed unto him against that day."—To
 the kind enquiries of a friend he answered,
 " Here I am, cast down but not destroyed;"
 And upon another occasion repeated a verse of
 the charming hymn he had formerly composed,
 and which was printed †:

Father at thy call I come:
 In thy bosom there is room
 For a guilty soul to hide,
 Press'd with grief on every side.

* Mentioning *Dr. Priestley* by name; and I think it argues
 very highly in favour of the doctrines of our Lord's Deity
 and atonement, and of his free and efficacious grace, that *Dr.*
STENNETT, a man of strong natural parts, a cool and dis-
 passionate reasoner, and whom none that knew him would
 charge with ignorance or enthusiasm, believed in and avowed
 those doctrines in his life; and gave so explicit a testimony to
 their usefulness and importance, when flesh and heart failed,
 and he viewed himself as going to appear before God the Judge
 of all. If *Dr. Priestley* should ever see this note, I wish it may
 be duly weighed, as he also must die.

† Hymn cclxx, of *Dr. Rippon's Collection*.

To

To his son who (at that time very ill also) came to see him, he said, " My son, God hath done great things for us. He is very gracious to us. I can leave myself and my family with him." In short, every little speech he uttered indicated the invariable frame of his mind, that he was happy in God, and that the ground of his happiness was the love of God, in laying down his life for us. " Other foundation " as he expressed it with vehemence, " can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The powers of expression were taken from him, a few hours before his departure; but he went off in a tranquil and easy manner. He fell, as did his partner before him, quietly asleep in Jesus, and when Christ shall come again they also shall come with him. " O! blessed are the dead which die in the Lord that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them!"

You will excuse the length of this discourse, as it is the last tribute of respect I can pay him, who shewed me so much; and these lively evidences of what he was to the last, could not without injustice to the world be suppressed.— I conclude with a short address, to the family—the church—and the congregation in general.

My dear friends, the family of the deceased, you deeply feel his removal and absence from
you,

you, and that this also is a second shock, before the pain of the former was assuaged. But I hope it will in time reconcile you to both to reflect, that your father and mother were not taken from you in helpless infancy, or before you were able to act for yourselves; that while you saw many orphans around you, deprived of their chief succour, your's lived; and that for so many years you enjoyed their cares, their counsels, their examples, their prayers. Your sorrows therefore will I trust properly impress you, with the usefulness of recollecting the piety of both, and especially your father's wise instructions, and the triumphant attestation he gave to them in his latest moments. And you, my brother in the ministry, will I hope bear upon your heart, how deeply your spirituality, and acceptableness as a minister of Christ, affected your father's soul. May you study Christ more and more, have an extensive acquaintance with him and the methods of his grace, and as a preacher of the truth, be a zealous follower of a venerable list of ancestors, who shine in the pages of history—and more, who shine in the annals of eternity, as champions for Christ and free grace.—Besides the best of considerations, you and I, sir, have these emulating excitements to activity and exemplariness in the work of the Lord, that our respective families possessed

possessed what will be reputed at last the truest dignity; that we are descended from those worthies who were famous for their firm attachment to the gospel, who laboured and who suffered more abundantly, who in effect laid down their lives in the cause of Jesus, who, valiant for the truth, fought the good fight, who finished their course, and who, endure what they might, kept the faith. May we follow them even as they followed Christ, and be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

You, my friends of this church, will believe me, that I sincerely weep with you on your present bereavement. But I need not remind you that the chief Shepherd lives, and that gifts as well as grace are in his hands. To him I doubt not your eyes are directed, and upon him it will be your wisdom patiently to wait. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may lift you up*." The mutual affection between you and your late pastor, will move you to shew respect to his surviving family, as if he were present with you; and that concern he had for your peace and welfare will I trust be before your eyes, and speak to

* 1 Pet. v. 6.

you now he is dead, " Finally brethren farewell,
 " be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one
 " mind, live in peace, and the God of love and
 " peace shall be with you*." May God bless
 you, and his love cement your souls together in
 Christ Jesus!

And now, what shall I say to the congregation
 which attended on the ministry of our late ho-
 noured father? I hope there are some of you that
 have not only heard, but understood what he so
 pathetically spoke unto you. My heart's desire
 is, that you may be inclined to follow his advice,
 and may encourage his church, by giving your-
 selves up to God, and to his people by the will
 of God.—But do I not speak to others, who have
 hitherto bid defiance to every admonition urged
 upon them?—Whose hearts are still hardened in
 unbelief, and contempt of the great salvation?—
 Ah! what will ye do, if after all the glowing
 descriptions and moving exhortations you have
 heard, you remain lost in impenitence and sin?
 —How will ye stand, if Dr. STENNETT appear a
 witness against you, in the great day of account?
 —O! may you who now forget God awake, and
 consider these things, lest he tear you in pieces
 and there be none to deliver. Death will shortly
 speak to you more forcibly than I can, or than

* 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Dr. STENNETT did. He will say, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He will summon you to the tribunal of the Most High, and fix your abode finally and for ever. May God make you wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus!—Let us now direct our cries to him. "Help, Lord! for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." May the mantle of Elijah and a double portion of his spirit, rest upon Eli-sha! And may the church encrease, be edified, and built up! Amen and Amen!

THE END OF THE SERMON.

An

AN HYMN composed by DR. STENNETT, and
sung after the Sermon.

I.

AND have I, CHRIST, no love to thee,
No passion for thy charms?
No wish my SAVIOUR's face to see,
And dwell within his arms?

II.

Is there no spark of gratitude,
In this cold heart of mine,
To Him whose generous bosom glow'd
With friendship all divine?

III.

Can I pronounce his charming name,
His acts of kindness tell;
And while I dwell upon the theme,
No sweet emotion feel?

IV.

Such base ingratitude as this,
What heart but must detest!
Sure CHRIST deserves the noblest place
In every human breast.

V.

A very wretch, Lord, I should prove,
Had I no love to thee;
Rather than not my SAVIOUR love,
O may I cease to be!

THE
ADDRESS

AT THE

INTERMENT:

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

AT the tomb of Lazarus, *Jesus wept*; and at this grave my tender feelings are uncommonly strong: not only because of that high esteem which I had for my senior Brother, whose corpse we have now committed to the silent sepulchre; but also on account of my having so recently stood here, to address my fellow mortals at the funeral of his dear, deceased Wife*. But, whether our serious impressions be acute, or languid, we should endeavour to improve the af-

* Mrs. STENNETT died March 16, 1795.

fecting event which has called us together, by employing a few minutes in suitable reflections.

That each of us must die, we all admit; and that the time of our exit is quite uncertain, we cannot deny. Of this uncertainty we are daily reminded, by those events which are taking place. How often are one and another cut off by a sudden stroke! to which we, who are now healthy and vigorous, are equally liable. On this uncertainty of life, therefore, it is our wisdom, our duty, and our advantage, frequently to meditate, ardently praying, that we may be ready for death at any moment, *and found of the Lord in peace.*

The great solemnity which must attend our approaching decease, whenever it comes, very loudly demands our serious attention. We are frequently, indeed, while possessed of health and ease, in a solemn situation. Thus it is, for instance, whenever, in holy worship, we approach the universal Sovereign: *for our God*, with regard to his purity, his jealousy, and his justice, *is a consuming fire.* They, therefore, who serve him acceptably, treat him with reverence. But when, in religious worship, there is no solemnity, there is no reverence; and where there is no reverence of the Divine Majesty, there can be no devotion.—Then also do we feel ourselves in a solemn situation, when a fellow mortal expires

pires before our eyes: and, even at the present instant, our circumstances are very solemn. For here we have, not only the gaping tomb, the coffin, and the corpse, of our deceased Brother; but we are surrounded with multitudes of tombs, of coffins, and of corpses. We are, if I may so speak, in *Golgotha*; *the place of skulls*. We tread on human dust, and are compassed with all the gloomy apparatus of death. A deeply serious turn of mind, therefore, must become our present circumstances.—The solemnity attending these different situations, however, does not come home to our bosoms, does not penetrate the soul, equally with that which, we have reason to apprehend, will be experienced, on the near approach of our own dissolution: provided we have, in our concluding moments, the powers of reason in their proper exercise. For who can feel himself near to the last pangs of expiring nature, without a peculiar degree of solemnity? Who can consider himself as just entering the world of spirits, and into an untried state of existence, without feeling himself pervaded with solemnity? Who can perceive himself actually leaving all terrestrial things, and launching into a boundless eternity, without having the most solemn sense of entire dependence on God, for blessedness and for being, penetrating his very

E 2

soul?

soul? Now, as all these things await us, it must be rational, it must be wise, it must be an article of indispensable duty, frequently, in our meditations, to anticipate these future events, and earnestly seek to be ready for them.

On the extremely important consequences of death, we ought, in a particular manner, to reflect. Death destroys all our domestic and civil relations. Death, for a time, dissolves that mysterious union which, in the present state, subsists between the soul and the body. Death transmits the immortal spirit into the invisible world; and reduces the body to a deformed mass of senseless matter. When death has taken place on a fellow creature, his final state is fixed, either in happiness, or in misery, that is inconceivable and everlasting.

Nor should we forget, that death is an effect of sin, an appointment of God, and the strongest expression of divine justice, that is visible to us in the present state. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. It is appointed for men once to die." This awful appointment was announced to man, immediately after his apostasy. "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return," was part of the sentence pronounced by the Supreme on our first offending father. Death ought not, therefore, to be considered

sidered as due to nature: but, detached from the blessings of redemption by Jesus Christ, as the most awful visible effect of the divine curse, and as the arrest of eternal justice. Such is the representation which is given of death by inspired writers: and had it not been for sovereign mercy, revealed in atoning blood, it could never have been justly viewed in a more favourable point of light. So depraved and guilty, so polluted and wretched is man, as descended from the original parents of our species; that, had not God, by the gift and the death of his own incarnate Son, *commended his love* to sinners, the whole human race must have been involved in final ruin.

But, though all have sinned, and though all deserve to perish, there is redemption by Jesus Christ; which redemption, revealed in the word of grace, is a foundation of hope for the vilest. Though the vicarious work of Jesus, and the regenerating energy of the Holy Spirit, do not secure believers from temporal death; yet, as by the former, they are furnished with pardon and peace; and as, by the latter, their hearts receive an heavenly turn, being fitted for communion with God; so they have a solid foundation for hope of eternal felicity.

Remarkably expressive of divine authority, and exceedingly rich with divine grace, is the language of our adorable Jesus, when he says: " I am the resurrection, and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Delightful, glorious truths! That blessed book, the Bible, opens a door of hope, and a prospect of happiness beyond the grave, for the guilty and the wretched. Yes, " the glorious gospel of the blessed God," reveals a Saviour for the chief of sinners—a Saviour, whose atoning blood is equal to all our guilt; whose mediation is commensurate to all our wants; and whose grace abounds over all our unworthiness. Complete provision is therefore made, for the confidence, the hope, and the peace of real Christians, even in a dying hour.

With these incomparable truths and blessings, our deceased Brother was well acquainted. Having, as a guilty creature, " fled for refuge to the hope set before him" in the gracious gospel; having believed in Jesus Christ, as the " justifier of the ungodly;" he made them, for a course of years, the capital subject of his public ministry; and on them he delighted to converse, in his private intercourse with Christian friends.

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By these evangelical truths his hope was firmly supported in the near prospect of dissolution. These truths, warm on his heart, rendered him superior to the fears of death, and to the painful apprehensions of eternal judgment. To the admirable excellence of these truths he bore the most explicit and unequivocal testimony, when on the bed of death; by which his relatives, domestics, and Christian friends, were encouraged, comforted, and edified.

Of Socinian sentiments he, on the contrary, avowed his detestation; as of principles which must, in that situation, have abandoned him to keen distress, and to the horrors of dark despair. Nor can it be otherwise, when on a death-bed, with any one that knows the purity of God, and the intrinsic evil of sin. For then, feeling himself to be guilty, polluted, and worthless, he must either depend on sovereign grace, as manifested in the redemption of Christ, or sink in despondency. Then, how useful soever his life may have been; and though, as to the general course of his conduct, he possess the testimony of a good conscience; yet, knowing himself to be guilty before God, he will have recourse to sovereign mercy; he will plead the blood of atonement; and ascribe his whole salvation to that " grace which reigns through righteousness, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, as a deliberate reflection on the foregoing facts, cannot but greatly alleviate the sorrow of the children, the relatives, and the church, of our departed Brother; so they, being all deprived of his public ministry and private advice, of his ardent prayers and his affectionate care for their happiness; are bound to consider the solemn event as a call from God to self-examination, to an improvement of time, and to spiritual mindedness.

As to you, my Brother, and your affectionate Sister, the son and the daughter of our dear, departed Friend; your filial feelings, on this occasion, must be strong. But, though deprived of both your honoured and affectionate Parents in the course of a few months, the workings of your tender passions do not, I trust, exceed the bounds of dutiful submission to the divine will. Be thankful for the reasons you have to conclude that each of them sleeps in Jesus: and, so far as they followed Christ, diligently imitate their example. Make it your principal care to glorify God, by living devoted to Him whom your Parents loved; whom your Father preached; and in the faith of whom he was rendered so comfortable in the near prospect of dissolution.— You, I trust, my junior Brother, have learned something

something from your Father's death-bed, that will be of advantage to you in future life, not only as a Christian, but also as a Minister. Having heard from his lips of what incomparable worth Jesus Christ is to a dying believer, and of what vast importance an experimental knowledge of evangelical truth is to a departing saint; you have an additional motive, as grace may enable and providence give opportunity, to live by faith on Christ, as your atoning sacrifice; to preach Christ, as the great subject of evangelical truth; and to be his devoted servant, as the Lord of conscience—the Lord of the world—and the Object of supreme affection. Thus living upon Christ, and being thus devoted to him, there is reason to expect, that your own death-bed shall be calm and peaceful, as was that of your honoured Father. May a double portion of his gifts and graces rest upon you!

To you, the members of that Christian church of which our deceased Friend had the pastoral care, I would say; Study to shew the improvement which, through a divine blessing, you have derived from his ministry. This improvement must be manifested, not by loud encomiums on his gifts and graces, his learning and respectability; but, by your steady adherence to the truths

truths he preached, to purity of divine worship, and to regular discipline—By each conscientiously filling up his place in seasons of public devotion—By watching over one another with prudent, Christian affection—By walking together in love and peace—By zeal for God, benevolence to man, and heavenly-mindedness. These, Brethren, are the evidences by which you must prove, that the labours of your deceased Pastor have been really useful: for it is by these, and similar virtues, that any of us “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

To us, also, who bear the ministerial character, this event is big with important admonition. At this tomb we are loudly admonished, to pay a special regard to the state of our own hearts, respecting evangelical truth, religious duty, and heavenly things—To cultivate a growing acquaintance with Christ; with the characters he bears, the work he performs, the blessings he bestows, and the laws of his kingdom—Earnestly to seek spiritual-mindedness, and the anticipations of heavenly bliss—And to converse much with our own approaching decease. For *we* also must die; *we* also must come to judgment: and though our appearance,

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when performing public service, were ever so respectable in the eyes men; yet, if *we* deceive our own souls, if we be damned, our case will be shocking indeed! Were such the dreadful issue of our ministerial course, we might, perhaps, among all the miserable millions, be classed with the most wretched characters in hell. — Frequently, my Brethren, have self-reflection and observation caused me to suspect, that no professors of the real gospel have more need to guard against self-deception, than those who preach it. For there is extreme danger, of our not being careful to exercise devout affections as Christians, while we employ our gifts as Ministers—Of our praying, preaching, and administering positive institutes, merely as an official employment; without feeling our own interest in these means of religious improvement, and without favouring the edifying truths exhibited to others. This being habitually the case, we are, in the estimate of Christ, not pillars in his temple; nor living stones in the spiritual edifice; but the mere scaffolding of his house; having only an exterior and temporary connection with it. Or, in the language of Paul, “Sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals.” Often, when meditating on this important subject, have

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the following apostolic sayings occurred to my recollection: " All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. My brethren, be not many teachers*, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." Except our hearts be right with God; except they have an heavenly turn; of whatever use, through a divine blessing, our ministry may be to others, our own profession is vain. The longer I live, the more certain I am, that all pretences to piety, without spiritual-mindedness, are of no worth; and the more am I convinced how little of that holy affection I possess.

By this event we are further admonished to diligence in our professional studies and labours: not that we may shine as orators and as critics; not that, by learning and eloquence, we may obtain the applause of men: but that " by manifestation of the truth," we may " commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God"—That we may, in a scriptural manner, warn our fellow-creatures " to flee from the wrath to come—beseech them to be reconciled to God"—exhibit the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and the superabundance of divine grace, to the chief of sinners—endeavour

* Διδασκαλοι, James. iii. 1.

to edify believers “ on their most holy faith”—
to the utmost of our ability “ declare the whole
“ counsel of God”—that we may “ finish our
“ course with joy”—and, finally, receive the
approbation of our divine Lord.

To conclude: As many, in this large assembly,
it is highly probable, are yet in their sins—many,
in whom their hateful depravity reigns, and on
whom their enormous guilt abides; I would, at
the mouth of this tomb, and in the most earnest
manner, intreat them to consider their ways; to
examine their state; and to regard that provision
which grace has made for those who deserve
damnation. To what purpose are you called
Christians, while you believe not in Christ;
bear not his image; delight not in his ways;
and think little about him? Why talk of hoping
for heaven; while the happiness of that state,
and the way to enjoy it, make no part of your
business, nor have any share in your affections,
your cares, or your pursuits? Is any one, think
you, while ignorant of Christ, disaffected to God,
and averse from the way of holiness, likely to be
everlastingly happy in the divine Presence?
What! are ye who live without secret prayer,
without self-examination, without any degree of
holy intercourse with God, in the way to hea-
ven?

ven? Deceive not yourselves: for, verily, " ye
 " must be born again," or you cannot enter the
 kingdom of heaven.

Among my fellow-mortals of this careless character, there are, it may be, a few individuals who stately attended the ministry of our deceased Brother. But if so, they must frequently have heard him describe, in a very pathetic manner, the horrible situation of sinners who die in their enmity to the government and grace of God. What, then, do you think of yourselves, or what shall I say to you? Are you in the youthful stage of life, and promising yourselves much pleasure in a course of dissipation? I will say, with Solomon; " Rejoice, O young
 " man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer
 " thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in
 " the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of
 " thine eyes: but, know thou, that for all these
 " things God will bring thee into judgment."—
 Are you striving to obtain, or do you already possess, what is called an independent fortune? Do you congratulate yourselves on being successful in business, and on that ease of affluence in which you shall spend the many remaining years of your lives? I will, making some alteration, say with our Lord, in the parable; " Ye
 " fools!

"fools! this day may your souls be required of
 "you."—Are you hoary with years, and, though
 labouring under a load of infirmities, forgetful
 of death? I will say with Isaiah; "The sinner
 "being an hundred years old shall be ac-
 "curfed."—Are you in low, laborious life; ex-
 tremely illiterate, and very ignorant? Are you
 pleasing yourselves with supposing, that religi-
 ous knowledge, and the exercises of daily de-
 votion, are not required of persons in your
 station? I will again say with Isaiah; "It is
 "a people of no understanding: therefore he
 "that made them will not have mercy on them,
 "and he that formed them will shew them no
 "favour."—Are you seeking justification before
 God by your own righteousness? I will say with
 Paul; "As many as are of the works of the
 "law are under the curse—To him that work-
 "eth not, but believeth on him that justifieth
 "the ungodly, his faith is counted for righte-
 "ousness."—Are you pleasing yourselves with
 sound notions of evangelical truth, and of sa-
 cred ordinances; while habitually destitute of
 integrity, of benevolence, of chastity, or of tem-
 perance? I will say, with one and another of
 the Apostles; "Faith without works is dead—
 "The devils believe"—Ye "are the enemies
 "of

“ of the cross of Christ.”—Are you, finally, in a state of unbelief; having all your lives neglected the great salvation? I will say, with inspired teachers; “The wrath of God,” revealed in the curse of the law, “abideth on you—” “How shall you escape?” But, blessed be God, “there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared.”



THE END.

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 AGAINST THE
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 IN HIS BOOK, ENTITLED
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